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| | *Native Term.* | *Description.* | *Time (approx.)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 881 | (viii) | Ornamented upi exchanged for plain ones. | Follows directly. |
| | (ix) | Burning of *tobar tfan*, *rorer* trees, *kaisa* figures, and the *upi* worn up to time of *watatcutf*. | " " |

III. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS CONNECTED WITH *WASIPSIP*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. *wancilbi* | Seclusion of novices in bush. | A few days. |
| 2. *WASIPSIP* | Ceremony for discarding *upi*. | At any convenient time after *watatcutf*. |
| (i) | Novices return to village and enter enclosure. | At noon on appointed day. |
| (ii) | *Upi* removed by *amro* and hair of novices cut short, inside enclosure. | At dawn, day following i. |
| (iii) | *Kôma* with *amro* carrying novices on their shoulders. | Immediately following. |
| (iv) | Novices given water, which they must really drink. | " " |
| (v) | *Kôma* in which novices join. | Till sunset on same day. |

*Note.* Parkinson (1907, p. 657) gives an illustration of some boys wearing the *upi*, with a few details of the time of seclusion in the bush, and a description of a ceremony which appears to be a combination of the *watatcutf* and the *wasipsip*. He makes no mention of any ceremony held when the novices first put on the hat. It does not appear that he had himself witnessed the ceremony he describes, and he admits that his information regarding the wearing of the hat is scanty. But it is, of course, possible that the procedure may have been changed in the interval between his account and my own.

## DISCUSSION OF CUSTOMS CONNECTED WITH THE WEARING OF THE *UPI*, AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE LIFE OF THE VILLAGE

882 As has been previously stated, a boy wearing the *upi* is strictly
182 enjoined to avoid all but the most distant association with girls and women, and is forbidden to enter any hut in which a woman lives, including that of his mother. It follows that the putting on of the hat involves the withdrawal of the boy from family life. He may still come to the door of the hut and receive the taro or bit of fish which his mother or some other woman may hand out to him, but he cannot go and sit with his family while he eats it. He lives and sleeps in the boys' house with others of his kind. He therefore has no part in the two things which the members of a family (in our sense of the word) usually share—their meal and their roof.

881 Conversations with many native women on this subject leave me
182 in no doubt that the women feel very keenly this break—often the first—in their family life. The ritual wailing which accompanies

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the withdrawal of the novices into the bush for their seclusion preparatory to the *wapi* ceremony is not only the formal expression of their fear lest harm should befall the boys in their new and perilous adventure, but also an occasion for the shedding of real tears over the son who is no longer a baby—an intensified form of the feeling 'he isn't mine any more', of the English mother when her son first goes to boarding-school, mingled, as in her case, with pride in the boy who is on his way to become a man. With regard to the boys, it is no easier to get at the real feelings of a Melanesian youth than it is with his English counterpart, but I think that, except in the case of the boy who takes the step at too early an age, pride in his new status definitely triumphs over any regret he may feel at losing contact with his mother and sisters. An atmosphere of mysterious importance surrounds him all the time he wears the *upi*. I have often been out with a group of women when they have suddenly scattered from the narrow track into the bush, with a whisper of '*Upi!*' to make way for a party of boys returning from some ploy of their own. I have walked with women, who were carrying a heavy load, through an extra mile of long wet grass to reach the village by a roundabout track in order not to pass too close to the *tobar*. If I had occasion, as sometimes occurred, to speak sharply to one of these boys for some reason of my own, looks of horror from any woman who happened to be within hearing distance indicated that I had failed in the respect due to the hat. In all the discussions I had with both men and women, the same deference was paid to the *upi*. It has a marked effect on the psychology of the village. The women in particular seem never to be entirely free from a certain compulsion—oppression is perhaps too strong a word—connected with it.

The *upi* itself is apparently only a symbol. The really important thing is the hair, which is pushed up inside it, and must be kept hidden under it. The purpose of the preliminary seclusion in the bush is to give the hair time to grow long enough to keep the *upi* in position, and the reason for the fear of the hat falling off or being jerked out of place is that the hair would then be seen. If a woman were to catch sight of it she would be put to death.

It is, of course, very tempting to quote the parallel of Samson, and to see in the flowing locks the source of the youth's strength, of which the glance of a woman might deprive him, but I could find no evidence that any such motive was present.

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There is, in the *wapi* ceremony, quite definitely the motive, familiar to anthropologists in the Duk-duk and other secret societies, of hoodwinking the women. To impress upon them the great power of the *urar* who will presently kill their sons, large areas of bush will be laid waste, and even groves of areca-palms in full bearing will be cut down, although the areca-nut is one of the most highly valued delicacies known to the natives, and is far from plentiful in this area. This destruction is clearly for the sole benefit of the women, since the novices do not see the result of it, or at least, not until after they have been enlightened as to the real interpretation of the *urar*. On both occasions of my attendance at the *wapi* ceremony the men took great pains to impress upon me that I must on no account betray their secret to the women, a promise which, of course, I faithfully kept. The question now arises, how far are the women really hoodwinked by all this mystery? In the case of the older women, I am pretty sure they know more than the men would like to think they did, but since the penalty of knowing these things is death—formerly direct, by spear thrust, nowadays indirect, by 'poison'—it is a wise woman who keeps her own counsel. Even to me, in private conversation, they permitted themselves no more than a tone of the voice or a gleam in the eye, and these are the only evidence on which I came to the conclusion I have just stated. To the younger women, I am inclined to think, the mystery is really a mystery. The shrieks of terror which came from the crowd when the *urar* figure appeared to them (that is, its head and shoulders, at a considerable distance, as previously described) were certainly not merely 'ritual feigning', many of the women grabbing their babies and rushing off into the bush, hysterical with terror. On my return to the village, the women made persistent attempts to get me to tell them what I had seen, but I was able to keep my promise to the men without offending the women by telling them that I was frightened, an excuse which they appeared to understand.

There is no doubt whatever about the value of the bull-roarer for impressing the uninstructed. Its sound, once heard, remains a vivid memory, and even a hardened anthropologist cannot hear that ominous roar booming through the forest without feeling its power, and forgetting, for the moment, that it is caused by a bit of wood twirled on the end of a string.

The bull-roarer and the *urar* figures whose voice it is supposed

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to represent are used at the *wapi* ceremony only, and this is the only one which is kept secret from the women. Both *watawutʃ* and *wasipsip* are held within the precincts of the village, and may be witnessed by anybody.

The people say that the *watawutʃ* is held in order to remove the taboo forbidding boys wearing the *upi* from entering huts occupied by women. It also removes, as previously stated, certain prohibitions regarding diet and chewing the betel-mixture. After this ceremony has been held there is no further need for the boy to be careful about being seen without his hat. The idea is, according to the old men, that as his growth of hair has been publicly shown when he climbed the *roror* tree, its length is no longer a secret, whereas if the women had seen it in the process of growth, they would not be surprised at its length when it was exhibited for their special benefit at the *watawutʃ* ceremony.

Most of the restrictions which have hitherto shut the wearer of the hat away from female society are relaxed after he has been through the *watawutʃ*. There still remains the taboo on sexual intercourse, which is not permitted until after the *wasipsip*. But the breaking of this rule is not so serious an offence as it would have been before the *watawutʃ*. One young man even asserted that sexual intercourse was allowed, provided the boy first took off his *upi* and left it in the *tobar*. Possibly this indicates a weakening in the observance of the rule, but it should be mentioned that the young man in question was not a very reliable informant, even when talking, as here, of matters with which he might be supposed to be well acquainted. Most people with whom I discussed this question were definitely of the opinion that a boy should not cohabit until he has finally removed the *upi*. The formal marriage ceremony is never held until the bridegroom has been through the *wasipsip*, although the girl to whom he has been betrothed, possibly from infancy, may have been living in his parents' hut for some time.

The keeping of this taboo imposes sexual continence upon the boys of this community not only during adolescence but also beyond it, since the *upi* may be seen on the heads of some who are, to judge from their appearance, fully mature young men. A few incidents illustrating the effect of this repression have been given in the previous pages, and some dreams reported by wearers of the *upi* are discussed in this connexion in Chapter XVI. The question

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would repay fuller investigation from the psychological standpoint than I was able to give it.

The boys wearing the *upi* are not exempt from taking their share in the work of the village. They are encouraged by the older men to share in their daily round. They help in cutting the bush to prepare the ground for planting taro, though they are not allowed in the taro garden while women are working there. They are taken fishing, both ordinary reef-fishing and bonito-fishing. They are taught the technique of canoe-making, house-building, and so on. They join in the ceremonial dances, going round in wheel-formation with the men.

As well as the activities which they share with the adult men, they have also their own. Parties of them were always going off into the bush on their own, either to hunt for small creatures to cook for themselves, or just to wander about. Not wanting to be always with their elders, and debarred from playing with girls of their own age, they have every inducement to develop an organized 'gang' among themselves. There is a word, *tobarupi*, which means 'all the boys' (in a given village). There seems to be a considerable amount of solidarity in their life together, and I do not think that any boy wearing the *upi* was deliberately made to feel an outsider. One of the boys at Kurtatchi was deaf and dumb, but he had been granted the privilege of putting on the *upi*, and was accepted by the others without distinction. They used to laugh at him sometimes, but it was always in friendly fashion, and they never left him out of their pursuits, having evolved a system of signs whereby he could be made to understand what they wanted to convey to him.

In times past, whatever secret chafing may have gone on in the privacy of the *tobar*, the boys seem to have accepted the restrictions under which they laboured with a good grace, and to have felt that they were compensated by the importance conferred upon them. But at the time of my visit signs of resentment at the irksomeness of the taboos might be detected among the older boys. They were supported in their rebellion by the Missions and the employers of labour, and some of the younger men shared their point of view, though every one was careful not to voice his unorthodox views too loudly, in case of punishment either by the *waur* or by the *tumaun*. One or two men with young sons told me, in private, that they were not going to let their children put on the *upi* when